

TRAINING ELECTION INSPECTORS

Opening The Polls/Closing The Polls

A board of election inspectors possesses full authority to maintain order in the polls. The board chairperson is responsible for overseeing all work performed. A majority of the board must be on duty at all times; an inspector may leave the polling place if necessary as long as the orderly operation of the polling place is not interrupted.

I. Preparation for Opening the Polls

The following tasks must be completed prior to the opening of the polls:

- Take and sign the constitutional oath of office.
- Display the flag of the United States.
- Establish a proper barrier.
- Check all forms and supplies.
- Post precinct instruction ballots and other notices found in your supplies.
- Arrange voting stations.
- Prepare special voting station for voters who are disabled.
- Inspect ballot containers (if any) – close and lock or seal.
- Arrange your workstation to ensure orderly processing.
- Prepare voting machines or devices if used (complete information to be provided by your clerk).

II. Opening the Polls

The polls must be ready and open for voting at 7:00 a.m.

III. Closing the Polls

- The polls must remain open for voting until 8:00 p.m.
- Every voter standing in line at 8:00 p.m. must be permitted to vote.
- The doors to the polling place must remain unlocked.
- Persons observing the closing of the polls may not cross the barrier and must conduct themselves in an orderly manner.
- The board may clear the polls if necessary to assure the orderly completion of the precinct's records.

Processing Voters

I. Completion of "Application to Vote" and Identification of Voter

- Ask voter to print and sign his or her name, enter his or her **current** residential address and day and month of birth on an Application to Vote.
- Confirm the voter's identity by comparing the birth date and address on the Application to Vote with the voter's birth date and address on the precinct's Qualified Voter File registration list.
- Check to see if person received an absent voter ballot; if yes, the person cannot vote unless he or she surrenders the ballot. (If the ballot is surrendered, make a notation on the remarks page in the Poll Book and write, "CANCELLED – VOTED IN PERSON" on the

return envelope containing the ballot. If the person claims that the ballot was lost, destroyed or never received, contact the clerk for direction.)

- If the person is satisfactorily identified and was not issued an absent voter ballot, initial the application.

IMPORTANT NOTES (See same heading – Election Inspectors’ Procedure Manual)

1. Name does not match
2. Voter signs with a mark
3. Address does not match; refer to “Voters Who Have Moved”

II. Offering Instructions

Ask each elector if he or she wishes to receive instruction on the voting process.

- Always offer to give instruction on all aspects of the voting process including write-in votes.
- Warn that you cannot vote for more candidates than the number stated in the office heading.
- If a partisan primary, remind voters that they must vote for candidates under a single party heading.
- Never attempt to influence the voter’s choices.
- Allow the voter to practice voting on “demonstration model” if available.
- If the voter asks for additional instruction after entering the voting station, two election inspectors who have expressed an affiliation with different political parties may enter the voting station to give the requested instruction; after giving the needed instruction, leave the voting station to allow the voter to vote in private.

If the voter requests assistance in casting the ballot, refer to “Assisting Voters Cast Ballots.”

III. Recording Election Date on List

As soon as it has been determined that the elector is qualified to vote, make a notation on list. (Follow the clerk’s directions on the preferred method for indicating voter participation.)

IV. Issuing Paper, Punch Card and Optical Scan Ballots

- Record the ballot number on the Application to Vote; return the Application to Vote to the voter.
- Paper Ballots: If a “set” of separate paper ballots must be issued, all ballots contained in each set must show the same ballot number.
- Punch Card Ballots or Optical Scan Ballots: (Central Count System) – Stamp or write the precinct number on the bottom of the ballot.

V. Escorting Voters to Voting Machines and Direct Recording Electronic Voting Stations

Return the initialed Application to Vote to the voter and direct the voter to the inspector operating the voting machines or activating the direct recording electronic voting stations.

VI. Receiving Voted Paper, Punch Card and Optical Scan Ballots

Paper Ballots: The voter is required to properly fold and return all ballots to an inspector for verification.

Punch Card Ballots: The voter is required to insert the ballot card into the ballot secrecy envelope with the stub exposed and then return the ballot card and secrecy envelope to an inspector for verification. If the ballot card is not properly inserted in the secrecy envelope, instruct the voter to insert the ballot card in the envelope the proper way.

Optical Scan Ballots: The voter is required to insert the ballot in the secrecy folder with the stub exposed and then return the ballot card and secrecy folder to an inspector for verification. If the ballot is not properly inserted in the secrecy folder, instruct the voter to insert the ballot in the folder the proper way.

VII. Verifying and Depositing Voted Paper, Punch Card and Optical Scan Ballots

Check to see if the number of the stub of the voter's ballot matches the number of the ballot issued to the voter as recorded on the Application to Vote.

Paper Ballots: If the numbers match, an inspector tears off the stub(s), deposits the ballot(s) into the ballot container and passes the Application to Vote to the inspector handling the Poll Book.

Punch Card Ballots: If the numbers match, an inspector tears off the stub, deposits the ballot into the ballot container and passes the Application to Vote to the inspector handling the Poll Book.

Optical Scan Ballots: If the numbers match, an inspector tears off the stub, passes the Application to Vote to the inspector handling the Poll Book and allows the voter to feed the ballot into the tabulator. (If a "central count" precinct, the inspector deposits the ballot into the ballot container.)

IMPORTANT NOTES (See same heading – Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual)

1. If the number on the ballot stub does **not** match the number on the ballot issued to the voter, question the voter.
2. Under no circumstances is a voter allowed to leave the polling place with his or her ballot or any portion of the ballot (including the ballot stub).

VIII. Completing Poll Book

- The inspector handling the Poll Book lists the name of each voter in the Poll Book in the order that the Applications to Vote are presented – assign voter number.
- If paper, punch card or optical scan ballots are used in the precinct, enter ballot serial number appearing on Application to Vote in Poll Book beside the voter's name.

Notes on Processing Procedures

Secrecy of the ballot must be strictly maintained:

- Only those persons duly authorized to provide voting assistance may be present in the voting station when the voter makes his or her choices. (An exception is provided for minors under 18 years of age. Refer to the Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual, "Processing Voters," for further information.)

- If a voter deliberately shows any person in the polling place how he or she voted, the voter's ballot is void. For further information, see "Spoiled ballots/Exposed Ballots."

Rearranging record keeping steps to meet administrative preferences:

- Various record keeping steps associated with the voter processing procedures may be rearranged to meet administrative preferences, however, care must be taken to assure that the security measures built into the procedure are not compromised in any way. (See same heading – Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual.)

Campaigning at Polls/Exit Pollsters

I. Campaigning at the Polls

Campaigning and solicitations are not allowed within 100 feet of any doorway being used by voters to enter the building in which a polling place is located. The following activities are restricted:

- Approaching voters to influence their vote.
- Distributing literature or write-in stickers.
- Displaying signs, posters, bumper stickers or information regarding a proposal on the ballot.
- Circulating petitions.
- Soliciting donations – any sales activity.

Election Inspectors have the right to ask voters entering the polls to remove campaign buttons or cover up clothing bearing a campaign slogan or a candidate's name. Voters may also be told to conceal campaign literature or materials brought into the polls. Periodically check voting stations for campaign materials left behind by voters and discard any that is found. If a person persists in violating any of the above restrictions, contact the clerk or, if necessary, local law enforcement authorities.

II. Literature, Signs, Posters

- Michigan election law stipulates that "a person shall not post, display, or distribute in a polling place, in any hallway used by voters to enter or exit a polling place, or within 100 feet of an entrance to a building in which a polling place is located any material that directly or indirectly makes reference to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question."
- **The above restriction includes materials developed to inform voters on the "pros" and "cons" of ballot proposals.**
- A voter may park a car or other vehicle bearing campaign materials within 100 feet during the time he or she is voting.

III. Exit Pollsters

"Exit pollsters" are persons employed to survey electors **after** they have voted. Exit pollsters must:

- Remain at least 20 feet from the entrance to the building
- Not enter the building and
- Not question voters entering the building.

Challengers/Poll Watchers

I. Challengers

“Challengers” may be appointed by political parties and qualified interest groups to observe the election process in voting precincts and absent voter counting board precincts. A challenger has the right to challenge a person’s qualifications to vote if the challenger has reason to believe that the person is not qualified to vote in the precinct. A challenger also has the right to challenge the actions of election inspectors operating the precinct if the challenger believes that election law is not being followed. An official challenger:

- May be appointed to serve in more than one precinct.
- Must be a registered voter of the State of Michigan.
- Must represent a recognized political party or qualified interest group. Two challengers from each party or interest group are allowed in a voting precinct at any given time; only one of the challengers may hold the authority to challenge at any given time. The challengers may alternate the authority to challenge at their discretion. The challengers must advise the precinct inspectors each time the authority is alternated. Only one challenger from each party or interest group is allowed in an absent voter counting board precinct at any given time.
- May **not** be a candidate. EXCEPTION: A candidate for precinct delegate may serve as a challenger in any precinct except his/her own.
- May **not** serve as an election inspector in the election.
- May **not** campaign, distribute campaign material or wear campaign buttons in the precinct.

Credentials: Challengers must have a “challenger card” issued by the appointing political party or interest group. An “ELECTION CHALLENGER” badge is also recommended.

Conduct: Challengers must conduct themselves in an orderly manner. A challenger can be expelled from the precinct for unnecessarily obstructing or delaying your work; touching ballots, election materials or voting equipment; or acting in a disorderly manner.

Rights of Challengers: Election Inspectors must accommodate challengers. Challengers may observe all procedures being carried out and are permitted behind the election inspectors’ table. Challengers have the right to:

- Examine the voting equipment before the polls open and after the polls close.
- Observe the completion of Applications to Vote and processing of voters (may not observe electors voting).
- Visually inspect the Applications to Vote, Poll Books, registration records and any other materials used (may not touch any materials).
- Inspect ballots (including absent voter ballots) during counting (may not touch ballots).
- Keep notes regarding their observations.
- Remain in the precinct until all work of board is complete.

Challenge Procedure: A challenger may challenge a person’s voting rights if he/she has good reason to believe that the voter is not registered; this type of challenge must be made immediately after the voter completes an Application to Vote. The challenge must be a “proper” challenge; “improper” challenges are not acceptable.

- A challenge is proper if it is based on information obtained by the challenger through a reliable source or means. For example, the challenger has obtained information that a particular voter:
 - Is not a true resident of the jurisdiction
 - Has not yet attained 18 years of age
 - Is not a United States citizen or
 - Did not register to vote on or before the “close of registration” for the election at hand. A challenger should know the specific individuals he or she intends to challenge before the polls open on Election Day.
- A challenge is improper if it is not based on information obtained by the challenger through a reliable source or means. For example, a challenger does not have the right to issue a challenge based on an “impression” that the voter may not be eligible to vote in the precinct due to the voter’s manner of dress, inability to read or write English, perceived race or ethnic background or need for assistance with the voting process. Similarly, a challenger does not have the right to issue a challenge due to any physical or mental disability the voter may have or is perceived to have. In addition, any election procedure that is not being properly performed by an election inspector may be challenged. A challenger may also bring to your attention the improper handling of ballots, campaigning or any violation of Michigan election law or other prescribed election procedure. All challenges must be directed to the chairperson of the board. The chairperson must handle challenges promptly and courteously or an inspector designated by the chairperson. The challenge of a person’s voting rights proceeds as follows:
 1. After the challenge is made, the chairperson or designated inspector administers the following oath to the voter: “I swear (or affirm) that I will truthfully answer all questions put to me concerning my qualifications as a voter.”
 2. The chairperson or designated inspector questions the voter regarding his or her qualifications as an elector (citizenship, age and residency).
 3. If the voter’s responses under oath prove that he or she is qualified to vote, the voter is issued a “challenged ballot.” A challenged voter may **not** vote if he or she refuses to take the oath, answer the questions under oath or proves not to be qualified to vote by answers given under oath.
 4. A complete record of the challenge must be entered on the “CHALLENGED VOTERS” page in the Poll Book.

Preparing and Issuing Challenged Ballots:

A challenged voter must vote on a paper, punch card or optical scan ballot prepared as explained below; do not permit the challenged voter to vote on a voting machine or a direct recording electronic device.

- Write the number appearing on the voter’s ballot in pencil on the back of the ballot. If a punch card ballot is used, write the number in pencil on the secrecy envelope.
- Conceal the number with a small slip of paper. Use transparent tape to affix the paper over the number.
- Enter the voter’s name and ballot number in the Poll Book.
- Issue the ballot to the voter.
- After the voter has voted the ballot, deposit the ballot into the ballot container following the normal procedure. (If voting machines or direct recording electronic voting devices are used in the precinct, see below.)

Handling Challenged Ballots in Voting Machine and Direct Recording Electronic

Precincts: Have the voter place the ballot in an absent voter envelope; complete and sign the back of the envelope; direct the voter to sign the envelope; and write the word “CHALLENGED” across the face of the envelope.

- If your jurisdiction does **not** use absent voter counting boards, process the ballot as you would an absent voter ballot.
- If your jurisdiction uses absent voter counting boards, secure the absent voter envelope and notify the clerk.

Absentee Voter Challenge: If an absentee ballot being processed in your precinct is challenged, identify the ballot as described above, complete the processing of the ballot under the normal procedures, and make a complete record of the challenge on the “CHALLENGED VOTERS” page in the Poll Book.

II. Poll Watchers

An election is an open process that may be observed by any interested person. (Candidates should not be present in the polling place after they have voted due to conflicts with the provisions that prohibit campaigning within 100 feet of the polls.) A common term used when referring to persons, other than qualified challengers, who want to observe the election process is “poll watcher.” Poll watchers and challengers are different in the following ways:

- A challenger must be a registered voter of the State of Michigan; poll watchers do not have to be registered in this state.
- A challenger has the right to challenge a person’s voting rights and procedures being carried out by inspectors; poll watchers do not have this authority.
- A challenger may sit behind the processing table within the voting/processing area; poll watchers must remain in the public area of the polling place. Challengers have the right to inspect the Poll Book; poll watchers may inspect the Poll Book at the discretion of the chairperson. Neither may touch the Poll Book or other records.

Assisting Voters Cast Ballots

Whenever a voter receives help to vote his or her ballot, a complete record of the matter must be made in the remarks section of the Poll Book.

- Under state law, when an elector asks the precinct board for voting assistance, the needed help must be provided by two inspectors who have expressed an affiliation with different political parties. The voter does not have to state a reason for his/her request.
- Under federal law, an elector who is blind, disabled or unable to read or write may be assisted by any person designated by the voter, other than the voter’s employer or agent of the employer or an officer or agent of a union to which the voter belongs. The voter must be questioned regarding his/her reason for requesting assistance and a person designated by the voter to provide the assistance must be questioned regarding his/her qualifications to assist the voter. (See same heading – Election Inspectors’ Procedure Manual.)

Spoiled Ballots/Exposed Ballots

I. Spoiled Ballots

A voter who spoils his or her ballot may obtain a new ballot. (Refer to the Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual, "Spoiled Ballots/Exposed Ballots" for detailed information.)

II. Exposed Ballots

If a voter who **deliberately** shows any person in the polling place how he or she voted, the voter's ballot is void and must be rejected. **DO NOT PERMIT THE VOTER TO VOTE AGAIN IN THE ELECTION.** (Refer to the Election Inspectors' Procedure Manual, "Spoiled Ballots/Exposed Ballots" for detail information.)

Voters Who Have Moved

If the residential address entered by the voter on the Application to Vote shows that the voter has moved, proceed as follows:

I. Move Within City or Township

A registered elector who moves within the same city or township that fails to submit an address change prior to the election can vote one last time in the precinct where he/she is registered. Proceed as follows:

1. Have the voter complete an Election Day Change of Address Notice.
2. Make the proper check to identify the voter.
3. Initial the Election Day Change of Address Notice and the Application to Vote.
4. Forward the Election Day Change of Address Notice to the clerk.

II. Move to a Different City or Township

A registered elector who moves from one Michigan city or township to another Michigan city or township – who fails to reregister in the new city or township – can vote one last time in the precinct where registered **IF THE MOVE WAS MADE WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE ELECTION.** Proceed as follows:

1. Have the voter complete a Cancellation Authorization.
2. Make the proper check to identify the voter.
3. Initial the Cancellation Authorization and the Application to Vote.
4. Forward the Cancellation Authorization to the clerk.

Missing Registration

If the voter's name cannot be found in the precinct voter registration records, the appropriate course of action must be determined. Consider the following three possibilities:

1. The voter's address is not in your precinct (wrong precinct);
2. The voter's registration record was lost; or
3. The voter's registration has been canceled.

To determine if the voter is qualified to vote, proceed as follows:

I. Step One: Check Address

Check the address on the Application to Vote to confirm that the voter is in the proper precinct. If not, direct the voter to the proper precinct.

If the voter is in the proper precinct, ask the voter if he/she has a voter identification card or a validated voter registration receipt. If the voter can produce either document, proceed under “Voter Able to Produce Voter Identification Card or Voter Registration Receipt.” If the voter cannot produce either document, proceed under “Voter Unable to Produce Voter Identification Card or Voter Registration Receipt.”

II. Voter Able to Produce Voter Identification Card or Voter Registration Receipt

Voter Identification Card – check the following:

1. Was the card issued by the local clerk?
 2. Is the address in the precinct?
 3. Does the voter still live at the address shown?
- If the answer to all three items is “yes,” contact the clerk for direction.
 - If the answer to the first two items is “yes” but the person has moved, refer to “Voters Who Have Moved.”
 - If the card was issued by the clerk of a different city or township, direct the voter to the proper community, or if the address is in a different precinct, direct the voter to the proper polling place.

Voter Registration Receipt – check the following:

1. Is the address in the precinct?
 2. Is the receipt dated on or before the close of registration?
 3. Is the person at least 18 years of age and a United States citizen?
 4. Does the voter still live at the address shown?
- If the answer to all four items is “yes,” contact the clerk for direction.
 - If the answer to the first three items is “yes” but the voter has moved, refer to “Voters Who Have Moved.”
 - If the address is in a different city or township, direct the voter to the proper community.
 - If the receipt is dated after the close of registration, the applicant is ineligible to vote.
 - If the applicant is under 18 or is not a United States citizen, he or she is ineligible to vote.

III. Voter Unable to Produce Voter Identification Card or Voter Registration Receipt

If the person is unable to produce a Voter Identification Card or validated Voter Registration Receipt, the person can vote if he or she:

1. Has never voted in the city or township before and claims to have submitted a voter registration prior to the registration deadline for the election at hand;
2. Completes and signs an Affidavit of Voter Registration;
3. Shows proof of identity; and
4. Completes and submits a new voter registration application.

If it appears that the voter can vote under the above procedure, contact the clerk for direction. If it is confirmed that the voter can vote under the above procedure, the voter must vote a “challenged” ballot. (See ballot preparation procedure under “Challengers/Poll Watchers.”)

Processing Absentee Ballots

If absentee ballots have been forwarded to your precinct for processing, they may be processed throughout Election Day as time permits; proceed as follows:

1. Determine the legality of the ballot:
 - a. Check the signature on the absentee ballot return envelope.
 - b. Check the registration list to confirm that the voter has not already voted in person.
2. If it is determined by a majority of the board that the ballot is illegal and should not be counted do not open the return envelope. Write “REJECTED AS ILLEGAL” on the envelope along with the reason. This notation must be initialed by the chairperson.
3. If it is determined that the ballot is legal and should be counted, enter the date of the election on the registration list.
4. Remove the ballot from the return envelope.
 - a. Paper Ballot: Do not unfold the ballot(s). If a complete set of ballots was not returned, note any missing ballots on the remarks page in the Poll Book.
 - b. Punch Card Ballot: If the voter did not return the ballot card, make a notation on the remarks page in the Poll Book. If the voter did not return the secrecy envelope, insert the ballot card in the secrecy envelope from your supplies. If the ballot card is not properly inserted in the secrecy envelope, reinsert the ballot card in the proper manner.
 - c. Optical Scan Ballot: If the voter did not return the ballot, make a notation on the remarks page in the Poll Book. If the voter did not return the secrecy envelope, insert the ballot in a secrecy envelope from your supplies. If the ballot is not properly inserted in the secrecy envelope, reinsert the ballot in the proper manner.
5. Check to see if the number on the ballot stub matches the ballot number recorded on the absent voter ballot application. If the stub is missing or the ballot number does not match, enter a notation on the remarks page of the Poll Book and prepare the ballot as a “challenged” ballot. (See ballot preparation procedure under “Challengers/Poll Watchers.”)
6. Enter the voter’s name, the ballot number and the letter “A.V.” (absent voter) in the Poll Book.
7. Print the voter’s name, voter number (from Poll Book), ballot number and the letters “A.V.” on a blank Application to Vote. The election inspector who checked the legality of the ballot initials the application. (NOTE: If the voter completed the Application to Vote portion of the absentee ballot application it is not necessary to complete an additional Application to Vote.)
8. If processing a paper ballot or a punch card ballot, remove the ballot stub and deposit the ballot into the ballot container.
9. If processing an optical scan ballot, remove the ballot stub and insert the ballot into the tabulator.

If an absentee ballot is received from a person who is not registered in your precinct, do not open the return envelope. Contact the clerk for instructions. Return all absentee ballot envelopes – whether opened or not – to the clerk after the polls close.

Write-In Candidates

I. Providing Information

If a voter asks for information on the write-in candidates who are seeking the offices on the ballot, advise the voter to contact the clerk. Do not provide the names of write-in candidates if asked or display the names of write-in candidates inside the polling place.

II. “Declaration of Intent” Requirement

An individual who wishes to seek nomination or election to a federal, state, county, city, township, village or school office with write-in votes is required to file a “Declaration of Intent” with the appropriate election official by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the election.

- The local clerk is responsible for notifying the precinct board of any write-in candidates who filed a Declaration of Intent.
- A write-in vote cast for an individual who has not filed a Declaration of Intent does not count. Write-in votes which do not count are not considered when determining whether an “over vote” has occurred or whether a “cross vote” vote has been cast at a partisan primary.
- The Declaration of Intent requirement is waived if a candidate appearing on the ballot for the office involved dies or is otherwise disqualified on or after the Wednesday immediately preceding the election. If the waiver is invoked, all write-in votes cast for the office must be counted including any write-in votes cast for candidates who have not filed a Declaration of Intent.

III. Declaration of Intent Requirement: Precinct Delegate Positions

- An individual who wishes to seek a precinct delegate position with write-in votes is required to file a “Declaration of Intent” with the city or township clerk by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the August primary. As an alternative, such candidates may file a Declaration of Intent with their board of election inspectors on the date of the August primary anytime prior to the close of the polls.
- The local clerk is responsible for notifying the precinct board of any precinct delegate write-in candidates who filed a Declaration of Intent.
- If an individual interested in seeking a precinct delegate position with write-in votes asks for a Declaration of Intent form on Election Day, provide the requested form.
- A write-in vote cast for a precinct delegate candidate who has not filed a Declaration of Intent does not count. Write-in votes which do not count are not considered when determining whether an “over vote” has occurred or whether a “cross over” vote has been cast at a partisan primary.
- The Declaration of Intent “waiver” does not apply to precinct delegate positions. (The Declaration of Intent waiver, applicable to all other offices on the ballot, is invoked if a candidate appearing on the ballot for the office involved dies or is otherwise disqualified on or after the Wednesday immediately preceding the election.)

IV. Recording Write-In Votes

Record all valid write-in votes exactly as they were cast. Include any name variations or name misspellings that may appear.